

October 23 2020

# Noticias y Notas

News and notes from the Second Judicial District Court

## State Bar names FSP “Exemplary Program”

Having a home in foreclosure can be an extremely traumatic experience. It can make a homeowner feel they have no choice other than surrendering and leaving their home on whatever terms the lender dictates.

In the Second Judicial District that does not have to be the case. The Court’s Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program—also known as the Foreclosure Settlement Program—helps homeowners and lenders negotiate settlements that typically involve



Program Administrator Chris Peck, left, and Staff Attorney Susie Widner are two-thirds of the Exemplary FSP team. Contract Attorney John Higgins is the third team member.

favorable outcomes for both sides. In many cases, the homeowner is able to stay in the home.

The Foreclosure Settlement Program has a three-person team that includes a program administrator who provides daily program management, along with a full-time staff attorney and a contract attorney. The two attorneys mediate settlements between homeowners and lenders.

For their efforts, the Foreclosure Settlement Program has been recognized an “Exemplary Program”

for the year 2020 by the State Bar of New Mexico.

Chief Judge Stan Whitaker and Presiding Civil Court Judge Beatrice Brickhouse nominated the program for this recognition, calling its team, “the epitome of dedication to public service, professionalism, efficiency and expediency to best serve the judiciary and the public, particularly during this time of crisis.” Judge Brickhouse also noted the team’s work greatly reduces the negative effects of the foreclosure process, which include stress for both parties and damage to the local economy if homes are left vacant. The program’s numbers since its 2016 inception speak to its effectiveness.

Over that time period, 87% of the cases in which a homeowner fully participated reached a successful settlement. Full participation means attending and completing an FSP foreclosure workshop and then following through with the mediation process.

Each homeowner who is a party to a foreclosure case filed in the SJDC is invited to participate in the program, which starts with the workshop. Chris Peck, the program administrator, leads these workshops, in which he gives an overview of the foreclosure process, explains how mediation works, and outlines the potential options homeowners might have for either keeping or surrendering their homes.

[For the rest of the story, click here.](#)



## Shout outs



This the space where we sound the horn for outstanding performances.

This week’s shout out goes to **Nineteen SJDC employees who participated in this week’s blood drive.** Your generosity is truly saving lives. We always want to acknowledge **Darrell Evans in Purchasing** for his continuous effort in organizing these drives. Finally, we offer congratulations to **DeAnne Santistevan from Self-Help & Allina Stover from IT** for winning movies tickets in the blood drive drawing. Remember, all blood drive donors get an hour of Admin leave. Think about that when the next drive comes around.

**We need more news and notes. Share your stories by contacting us at:**  
[albdshx@nmcourt.gov](mailto:albdshx@nmcourt.gov)

## Virtual Community Outreach

During the month of October, two SJDC Judges and a program attended virtual neighborhood association meetings, demonstrating the Court's commitment to serving—and being a part of—the community, even during the pandemic.

It started October 12, when Judicial Supervision and Diversion Program Manager Gilbert Jaramillo met with the Foothills Community Policing Council. This group is one of many throughout Albuquerque that maintains contact with Albuquerque Police Department officials assigned to their neighborhoods.

In his talk, Gilbert provided an overview of JSDP and answered questions about its various programs. "They liked hearing about our special courts and knowing that we had alternatives to dealing with people, other than locking every-one up," Gilbert said.



**JSDP Manager Gilbert Jaramillo met with the Foothills Community Policing Council.**



**Judge Daniel Gallegos met with the SR Marmon Neighborhood Association.**

Gilbert impressed the group so much that one its members complimented him at a meeting of the Bernalillo County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. "The information he provided on the special courts and pretrial supervision was enlightening to all of those who attended," said Bob Carleton of the Foothills Community Policing Council. "He also handled a barrage of questions with excellent humor and insight."

Judge Daniel Gallegos also received words of gratitude for meeting with S. R. Marmon Neighborhood Association on October 13. This group, comprised of residents of a neighborhood on Albuquerque's west side, wanted to know how criminal cases makes their way through the system from arrest to resolution.

An APD field officer described what happens during an arrest, and a detective detailed how APD gathers evidence to bring a case to court. Judge Gallegos then detailed the court's role in adjudicating cases—including arraigning defendants, making decisions on pretrial detention, and presiding over trials if necessary.

On October 22, Presiding Children's Court Judge Marie Ward participated in a discussion about the Juvenile Justice System during a meeting of the Valley Area Command Community Policing Council. Judge Ward explained that Children's Court addresses both juvenile justice and child welfare cases with child welfare abuse and neglect cases often dominating the Court's docket. She also noted that the Children's Code places an emphasis on rehabilitation for juvenile offenders, and the system follows a public health model. Bernalillo County Juvenile Justice System has been a national model site since 2005 under the Annie E. Casey Foundation model, and both system and community partners strive to provide families with needed services to address and reduce delinquent behavior.

The other panelists, who included Lt. Nicholas Sanders with APD's Crimes Against Children unit and de Eva Buchwald, a community advocate young people in the justice system, agreed this model was appropriate for improving the welfare of children as well as enhancing public safety. The panelists all agreed that providing access to services to families in need is key to reducing delinquent behavior and entry in the juvenile justice system. A number of community programs were identified that support youth and families in our community.

All of these meetings demonstrated that there are a lot of people in the community who are curious about—and supportive of—the role the Court plays making Albuquerque and the State of New Mexico a better place to live.



**Judge Marie Ward met with the Valley Area Command Community Policing Council.**